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Bungalow Ballads

XVI

BY
THE MEM-SAHIB



FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING
RUTH GERALDINE ASHEN
CLASS OF 1931

It's a sad thing
when a man is to be so soon forgotten
And the shining in his soul
gone from the earth
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing
when a man shall die
And forget love
which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing
that a man shall forget love
And he not dead but walking in the field
of a May morning
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of
Stanford Writing*, 1931

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1

2

BUNGALOW BALLADS.

1

—

—

2

BUNGALO

*To W. Home from the Author -
with kind regards -
P.S. Mary. 4. II. 1*

BUNGALOW

BALLADS.

BY

THE MEM-SAHIB.



PUBLISHED BY MRS. VESEY STOCKLEY AT THE
16TH BENGAL LANCERS' PRESS.

(By Permission.)

January, 1901.

11.5.2011

To my Husband.



HERE, by the cheery, English coal,
 I gather up these vagrant leaves,
 These jingles of a wandering soul,
 And bind them into little sheaves.

In many very varying keys,
 These halting measures have been sung,
 In many lands, on many seas,
 Their rhyming cadences were strung.

The major or the minor key,
 They change and mingle in our life,
 The sweet, or merry harmony,
 The discord harsh of wrong, or strife.

As when one walks an avenue,
 Where mighty branches meet on high—
 And here the sunlight pierces through,
 And there the heavy shadows lie.

But standing where I stand to-day,
 Though seas divide my Love from me,
 The murky shadows roll away,
 And chords swell out in melody.

Now, in the golden light of love,
 With sweet notes ringing in my ears,
 I only see blue sky above,
 And I forget the blinding tears.

I know that in that far-off land,
 Where trends the mighty, mystic Wall,
 Outstretched to me is one true hand,
 One voice that on my name doth call.

The "calling of the East" and more,
 I hear it calling day and night,
 O'er mountains, desert, sea and shore,
 I hear it—and I take my flight.

I come, I come, Dear Heart, as swift
 As ship can speed with panting steam;
 This sad six months, apart, adrift,
 Will soon be as some hideous dream.

I send to thee before I go,
 This little, foolish, rhyming book,
 Of camp, and wood, and bungalow,
 Of working days, and ingle nook.

The girl's, dim, vague, unshapen thought,
 Who would do something an' she could,
 The happy change thy presence brought,
 The love that crowns my womanhood.

And round each leaf, and out and in
 On every page, and through each line,
 One strong and golden thread I spin—
 The love that binds my heart to thine.

JOAN.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
To My Husband	v.
A New Year's Greeting	1
In a Garden	2
Parted	4
Benedict's Lament	5
Chota Hazri	7
A Farewell	9
Her Invitation to Him	11
His Invitation to Her... ..	12
In the Rains	13
To a Bride	14
The Tonga Road	15
A Serenade	17
Birdie	19
Wind in the Mango Trees	21
A Song of a Two Months' Leave	25
Her Rival	28
Only a Year Ago	31
Wixie	32
Stupid	34
In a Camp	36
Koksar Rest House	39
Back Again to Ambala	41
The Tale of a Tub	45
The Heart of the Forest	47
Sleep	49
Goose and Gander	50
Nature	51

viii.

	PAGE.
A Welcome	53
Together	54
Lift Thy Blue Eyes	56
Our Chronicle	58
In the Orchard	63
Alone	65
"Rowland ! Where Art Thou ?"	67
Bedtime	70
A Picture in the Fire	72
Parted	74



A New Year's Greeting.

—*—

LIGHT of the waning moon whitely is lying,
 Over the garden where lonely I stand,
 The old year, the sad year, the glad year is dying,
 The new year is dawning all over the land.

The old year which brought us such pain and regretting,
 The old year which brought us ecstatic delight,
 Ah ! Hope and true Love, it is of your begetting,
 The Peace that comes soft with the new year to-night !

Though parted by distance we watch it together,
 Dear, in the silence I whisper your name,
 I stand and I think of you, wondering whether
 'Twas LIFE I was living the years ere you came.

Dearest, my dearest, the year that is breaking,
 The first happy dawn of a sweet dual life,
 May God set his seal on the vows we are taking,
 And grant us His blessing as Husband and Wife.

In a Garden.

—*—

THE great red sun was sinking low,
 The crescent moon sailed high,
 The glory of the after glow,
 Made crimson all the sky.

The silence of the night had come,
 The hush of dying day,
 And like my heart—expectant, dumb,
 The quiet garden lay.

A man and woman walked again
 A garden dim and fair,
 And knew not whether joy or pain,
 Would seal their meeting there.

But Eve and Adam could not know,
 For they had not felt grief,
 The happiness that follows woe,
 The hope of glad relief.

Ah ! dearest while this heart shall beat,
 And these eyes see the light,
 I'll hear that whisper low and sweet,
 That I heard first that night.

And when the light fades from the land,
 Though distance doth divide,
 Again we stand close hand in hand,
 In the glowing eventide.

Thou that I love—ah ! lov'st thou me ?
 Bend low and whisper, " Yes,"
 Send through the gloaming silently,
 One little, mute caress.

It may be womanly and weak,
 This pleading for a sign,
 This wish that makes me search and seek,
 For what I know is mine.

But there was One of Galilee,
 He of the wounded foot,
 Said, " Simon Peter lov'st thou Me ? "
 And thrice the question put.

Dearest, I ask thee to repeat,
 But not in doubt or fear,
 I ask it for it is so sweet,
 Those joyful words to hear.

9, I, 99.



Parted.



IN the early hush of waking,
 When the earth is grey and still,
 When the first faint dawn is breaking,
 Thoughts of thee my spirit fill.

Then the sunbeams like red fingers,
 Stretch across the sky in flame,
 In the pines the first breeze lingers,
 Whispering to me your name.

Then the rain comes sighing, sobbing,
 Blotting out the hopeful light,
 And my heart is aching, throbbing,
 For the loss of its delight.

Then there comes a whisper stealing
 Softly, sweetly, in my ear,
 And the happy tranquil feeling,
 Love is present, far or near.

Love of thine and mine, ah ! dearest !
 Wraps us round though far apart,
 And I sometimes think thou hearest,
 All the secrets of my heart.

Secrets—ah ! whate'er their number,
 All are counted in one breath,
 One in waking or in slumber,
 Dear, I love thee unto death !

August, 1900.

Benedict's Lament.

—*—

ONCE I had a wide dominion,
 All a blooming bungalow,
 Clipt and shorn my wedded pinion,
 Freely now I cannot go.

Once in costume light and airy,
 I would wander night and day,
 Like a military fairy,
 There was none to say me nay.

Clad in bath sheet or pyjama
 I might loll and sit at ease,
 Now, my wife—it might alarm her
 Should she meet me, dressed in these!

Dressed in these and stalking gaily
 Through the drawing-room and hall,
 Yes, there are some things that daily
 Mind one of my wedded thrall.

There are rooms I hardly enter,
 In this bungalow of mine,
 I!—who was the one great centre,
 Of my house of auld lang syne.

Anwur points (my faithful bearer)
 To a wardrobe full of clothes,
 Clothes of which I'm *not* the wearer—
 Frills, and tucks, and furbelows.

Is there any compensation
 For the loss of Bacheldom?
 Any kind of consolation
 In the years that are to come?

Comes my Joan, my dearest charmer,
 With our last joke on her lips;
 Seems to like my striped pyjamas,
 Hanging graceful, on my hips.

Shall I join her in her laughter?
 No, I will be stern and grim—
 Scold her first—but kiss her after
 I'm the one and only Him!!

True, the past was sometimes dreary,
 With no company but my own,
 Now I have a comrade cheery,
 True and constant, in my Joan.

Yes, perhaps she makes up slightly
 For my loss of liberty,
 For the hours when dressed but lightly
 I was unbetrothed and free.

Could the priest undo the tying
 That ten days ago he tied,
 The chances are I might be sighing
 For my fetters and my bride.

Yes; perchance her yoke is easy
 Heavier bondage has been known;
 But I'm the master—I am—Vesey,
 You're a lucky woman, Joan!

Chota Hazri.

—*—

Or all our meals the one I love the best,
 Is that we take before we're tubbed or dressed,
 Just as the daylight breaks,
 When Joan the first tea makes,
 In her small sacred den.
 I do acknowledge then
 That Benedict is sometimes doubly blest.

No khitmutghar perambulating round,
 No view unsightly and no jarring sound.
 Each in our cushioned chair,
 Lazily sitting there,
 Watching the kettle boil,
 Nothing our péace to spoil—
 Such ease as bachelor I never found.

The cool air blowing through the waving trees,
 The dear companionship, the perfect ease,
 Half-spoken thoughts that rise
 Meeting response from eyes
 That read the thought unborn,
 Ah ! yes that cup at morn,
 Is worth a month of tiffins, dinners, teas !

Here we arrange, with tinkling cup and spoon,
 Making a cheery chota hazri tune,
 What work we each shall do
 Till tiffin time at two,
 Dressed in my favourite kit,
 Unchidden, I may sit,
 Making our plans for social afternoon.

'Tis only at this table, Frenchmen say,
 The Englishman allows his fancy play :
 Good though it be to dine
 Chatting across the wine,
 Sweeter it seems to me
 That early cup of tea.
 The calm content that greets the waking day.

15, III, 99.



A Farewell.

—*—

Don't tell me of banquets with acres of table,
 With guests unselected that count by the score,
 Let those sing their charms that delight in a bable,
 But give me for pleasure a party of four.

The olloy polloy of a fashionable rabble,
 Is a little bit worse than the meal of a monk,
 They clatter and chatter and gobble and gabble,
 I'd rather eat cheese in my own little bunk.

Give me the choice of my form of hilarity,
 How to dine royally every day,
 Something of likeness and much of disparity,
 I'd choose me to make up a party quarrée.

Maid, wife, and widow, and one happy Benedict,
 Think of the elements there to your hand,
 All well selected too, nothing that's derelict,
 Each of the choicest in all this wide land.

Each at the side of a table quadrangular,
 Each different in thought as in figure and face,
 And yet there is nothing that's acid or angular,
 Nothing but harmony reigns in the place.

Add to our number, it might add attraction,
 We might find it merry and so might our guest,
 But take away one and the act of subtraction,
 Would throw a despondency over the rest.

Fate and the government try their experiment,
 It's pure vivisection of quite the worst kind,
 Spoiling our argument, quenching our merriment,
 Wringing our heart, and unnerving our mind.

Black breaks the day of our fourfold lamenting,
 Sadly we walk to the old Tonga road,
 Fate and the government both unrelenting,
 Sever a link that no time could corrode.

Four of us walk to the old Tonga station,
 Four of us walk in a woebegone line,
 But alas ! for the strength of this double equation,
 One is cut off, at a quarter past nine.

Farewell, dear Benedict ! See us returning,
 Three lonely women, each wanting her pal,
 Watering the roads with a liquid that's burning,
 A liquid that comes from the gland lachrymal.

8. VIII. 98.



Her Invitation to Him.



UNDER the deodars, up on the hill,
Come to my picnic, dear sir, if you will,
Come to my picnic, a picnic of pegs,
On pony, in rickshaw, or on your own legs.

A picnic of tea where they meet by the score
Is an obviously, stupidly, out-of-date bore.
Mine is a picnic which shan't exceed two,
Myself on the one part—and shall it be—you?

There's a want of hilarity always in tea,
A want of true charity—don't you agree?
They sit in a circle and talk by the yard,
Their subject is scandal most cruel and hard.

But we up on Jakko, amongst the old apes,
With extract of barley, or juice of the grapes,
We'll talk of Philosophy, Science, or Art,
Music, Theosophy, things of the heart.

Music? Ah! yes sir, please bring your guitar,
Monkeys and melody, pegs and cigar.
That's my sort of picnic, my very dear sir,
Come, and I think you'll entirely concur.

His Invitation to Her.

—*—

COME to the Châlet, dear lady, to tea,
Fresh marrons glacés, and muffins there'll be,
A tête-à-tête dinner is ruled indiscreet,
Man, as a sinner, in dozens must eat.

The Committee consider the drawing of corks,
The changing of plates and the clatter of forks,
When only for two has a *souçon* of danger,—
It sounds a bit odd to the fair, youthful stranger.

But tea has an innocence sweetly its own,
You may drink it in couples, the holy won't groan,
There's a deep-cornered window—the view is thought
“sweet,”

A little, round table, and wide, cushioned seat.

There are papers to look at ; together we'll seek
For the best jokes and pictures in *Punch* of this week,
And there's a piano, a bit out of tune,
But you'll sing me a song on that braw afternoon ;

You'll pour out the tea, portion sugar and milk,
The tinkle of bangles, the rustle of silk,
Are sounds to a bachelor, heavenly sweet,
You'll come then to-morrow ? At five shall we meet ?

In the Rains.

—*—

MIST in the valley, mist on the mountain side,
 Silver and white it is lying, whiter than wool,
 Wind in the cedar trees sighing, all the air's full.
 Full of the gurgle of waters that ripple and glide.
 Mist in the far-off valleys, softly ye drift,
 Wrapping the world in a numbness, blotting out form,
 Deadening all soundness in a numbness. Oh for a storm,
 Silence to break with an echo, vapour to lift.
 Sweep up the valley, Oh ! storm-wind, show us once more
 Forests and crags in the distance, gleaming with light,
 Has the mist power of resistance? Can the fog fight?
 Shall we see elements raging? Giants at war?
 Softly right up to the window, touching the pane,
 Comes the mist silently, stealing, white as a ghost,
 Seeing, and hearing, and feeling, perish almost,
 When shall we want all our senses for service again?
 Out in the fog and the dampness, defying the day,
 Under the deodars dripping, heavy with wet,
 Falling and stumbling and tripping, learn to forget
 Dulness and fog in the flowers that spring in our way.
 Green are the ferns and the grasses, green and so sweet,
 Flowers are cheerily springing over the land,
 Nature her garland is flinging, with no niggard hand
 Blossoms and buds of the fairest under our feet.
 Over the mist is ever, the sky that is blue,
 Eyes that are maddened with grieving, flash me a "Nay!"
 Harder than pain is believing that grief melts away.
 I suffer and try to believe it, Lord is it true?
 6, VIII, 98.

To a Bride.

—*—

WAKE April morn with a smile of May,
Flood the green earth with sunshine warm and gay,
Forego thy character, be radiant bright,
Keep showers and clouds for darkness of the night.

Shine, for to-day, a dear and gentle bride,
Stands at the Altar by her lover's side,
April, as maiden changeable and coy,
To-day be kind, betoken nought but joy.

Or, if the clouds must come, kiss them away
In blushes at the dawning of the day
'Twere not unmeet, perhaps, one shower should fall,
One gracious, springtide shower reviving all.

For on this day, all happy though it be,
The sweet Bride's thoughts will flit across the sea,
And linger by her sister's resting-place,
The dear, lost sister with the angel face.

Sweet April day with sky of deepest blue,
With scudding clouds and sunshine piercing through
Old as the sunshine, older than thy name,
The mingled joy and pleasure they proclaim.

Ah ! sweet is life, Ah ! sad and very sweet,
Such sorrow 'tis to part, such joy to meet ;
Ah ! grief and gladness, changing light and shade,
Keep all thy treasures for our bridal maid.

If tears must come, ah ! send the laughter too,
If parting, love, that keeps the absent true,
Fair as her face, be life for her young feet !
Deal kindly with her Fate, as she is sweet !

The Tonga Road.

—*—

"GOOD BYE! Good bye!" How often is it heard,
But with degrees of sadness in the sound,
The tonga road is reeking of the word,
How many tears have fallen on that stony ground!

"Good bye." Perhaps the partner of a dance
Is going, and the next week's Ball will be
Less bright in consequence. She'll miss the glance
Of laughing eyes, and sit out number three.

Yes, sit out number three to think of him,—
Comes number four, and brings a partner gay;
By number seven his memory is dim,
By supper time 'tis almost passed away.

"Good bye." 'Tis lovers parting on the road,
The air is heavy with their heaving sighs,
Their hearts are laden with a leaden load,
The sorrow of the ages in their eyes.

"Good bye." Husband and wife are parting there,
For little voices call across the sea;
"Land of regrets!" such farewells fill the air,
Ah God! with parting send fidelity!

Friends clasp the hands of friends, trusting and tried,
"No, not good bye, for we shall meet once more,
'Tis true we're parting and the world is wide,
Still we shall meet again, 'tis au revoir."

And now and then, a parting that would seem,
 A greeting and a farewell all in one,
 Gone like the melting of a morning dream,
 The phantom of a friendship, just begun.

Two hands in passing that by chance have met,
 And felt the touch of union in the clasp,
 Enough to know the shadow of regret,
 That time has not vouchsafed a longer grasp.

Ah ! often in this careless, shallow world,
 Eyes gaze in eyes that answer back in light,
 Then far apart the might-be friends are hurled,
 And sympathy is quenched in sudden night.

The quick responsiveness of kindred minds,
 The recognition that a friend is come,
 The chord of harmony that strongly binds,
 Snaps in the weaving, and the notes fall dumb.

"Good bye ! Good bye !" Oh ! symbol of regret,
 Thou standest as the embodiment of pain,
 Yet harder still that we had never met,
 And hope is kind and whispers, "Meet again !"

18, VIII, 98.



A Serenade.

—*—

I STAND beneath thy window, Oh my sweet !
 I see thy shadow on the jealous blind,
 How would I kneel and kiss those small, bare feet,
 Were I behind; Oh! were I but behind !

The stars shine out above the mountain tops,
 The snow-capped giants of the radiant East,
 Thy shadow wanders to and fro—and stops—
 I see the coils of waving hair released.

I watch the movements of the busy brush,
 Backwards and forwards in that maze of gold.
 It pauses—Ah ! I hold my breath and hush—
 Art thinking, darling, of that tale I told ?

Those words, those rushing, burning words, that fell
 Resistless when we found ourselves alone ;
 Ah ! let me in, that I once more may tell
 That tale of love, my sweetest one, my own !

Ah ! let me in ! Cold shine the blinking stars,
 One flash of thy dear eyes were worth them all,
 The light of Venus, and the warmth of Mars—
 Beneath thy glance their heat and beauty pall.

I see thee with a timid maiden hand,
 The shielding curtain gently draw aside,
 Shall I beneath thy window keep my stand,
 No ! for thy modesty I will me hide.

To-morrow or the next day I will tell,
 How I beneath thy window watched all night,
 For didst thou learn it now, I know full well,
 Thy gentle heart would beat with sudden fright ;

To-morrow I will whisper all the tale,
 Will watch the pretty blushes, rising red,
 Will watch thy cheek now rosy pink, now pale,
 The sweet, shy drooping of the golden head.

The light is out ! My dearest is at rest !
 Shine, shine, Oh ! stars, and guard her where she lies !
 Good night, dear love, my beautiful, my best,
 'Tis night, indeed, when hidden are thy eyes !

4, VI, 98.



Birdie.

—*—

CLOSED, closed for ever are those dear, dark eyes,
 Folded for ever is each gentle hand,
 No more shall laughter from those sweet lips rise
 To cheer our exile in this far off land.

Oh ! happy, happy were those girlish feet,
 On their brief journey through her loving life
 She trod on flowers, as was justly meet.
 No load of sorrow, and no strain of strife.

Seventeen short years since first to us she came,
 And wrought on us her gay and winsome spell.
 We called her Birdie, and the foolish name
 Grew dear with usage ; it described her well.

For glad and joyous as the singing lark
 She filled our house with cheerfulness and song.
 A creature of the sunshine, hating dark—
 A messenger who could not tarry long.

Ah ! when we first saw flash Colaba light,
 Foremost she stood upon the crowded ship,
 Eager to see the watched for, welcome sight—
 Hope in her eyes, and laughter on her lip.

Ah ! little did we think next sunny day
 When stepping on the palm-clad golden shore,
 That here our darling would for ever stay,
 The dancing feet should wander—never more.

Dear Lord, who made so bright a life, so brief,
 And sent upon us such a weight of woe
 Pierce through the clouds of aching, bitter grief,
 Convince us it was best that she should go !

Was't better that the happy eyes should close
 Ere sorrow's seal upon her brow was set ?
 Better to give the fair, unfolded rose ?
 Help us, Oh Lord ! we cannot see it yet !

Not yet, not yet ! Beside the lonely grave
 Blinded with tears we read the sculptured stone,
 Knowing when once again we cross the wave
 We leave our daughter lying here alone.

Lord send, when we are absent, passing by
 Some exile from our own green, English land,
 May read her epitaph with pitying eye,
 And drop a flower with sympathetic hand.

7, III, 98.

Birdie Duncan died October, 1897, of enteric, at Poona. A
 sweet, happy child of seventeen.



Wind in the Mango Trees.



WIND in the mango trees sobbing and sighing,
 Sobbing and sighing and dying away ;
 Birds of the hot weather, restlessly flying,
 Dinning their piercing note all the long day.

Swift through the heavy air blue wings are glancing—
 Blue wings of jays as they light on the trees.
 Insects like motes in the sunshine are dancing—
 Oh ! for a breath of our cool English breeze !

Oh ! for a breath from the daisies and heather,
 Wind in the pines ! Oh ! to hear it again !
 April at home with its changeable weather,
 Cool, silver clouds and the patter of rain.

Patter of rain on the daffodils falling,
 Daffodils, daffodils tossing their bells,
 Sound of the homing rooks, cawing and calling,
 I hear it far off, like the murmur of shells.

Friend of my womanhood, dear and true-hearted,
 Like murmuring shells I can fancy thee speak,
 See thee, far off, through the tears that have started
 Tears that are falling like rain on my cheek.

Half the world's boundary between us is lying,
 Mountain and sea do their worst to divide—
 To-night I will come when the daylight is dying,
 Come through the distance and stand by thy side !

Stand by thy side for the space of a second,
Look in thine eyes with the strength of my soul.
Distance as distance it shall not be reckoned
True love can fly from Equator to Pole.

Wind in the mango trees sobbing and sighing,
Moaning and wailing—for pity's sake cease !
Birds of the hot weather, shrieking and crying
Give me one moment, one moment of peace !



POMES
ON THE MARCH.

*Wrote on our First Expedition,
May 13th—July 12th, 1899.*

A Song of a Two Months' Leave.

—*—

I SING a song of a two months' leave,
A Major may take and his pay receive.
I sing a song of a man and his wife,
From the heat of Ambala escaping for life,
All on the road to Kulu.

Yakdahns and kiltas, a score had they,
Mules to carry them, coolies to pay,
And seven servants of various kind,
And a dog that wouldn't be left behind,
All on the road to Kulu.

The start was made on a Saturday night,
The moon was young and its baby light
Shone on a wonderful, beautiful sight,
Man, wife, dog, servants, taking their flight,
All on the road to Kulu.

Clean and fresh as a Dhobie could do,
They entered the train—this honey-moon two,
But a wind sprang up and a dust storm blew,
At Amritsar they turned out a pitiful crew,
All on the road to Kulu.

Ah ! stuffy and breathless, the small hotel,
Dirty of aspect and doubtful of smell,
With a lady that sat at the table and yarned,
They wished she had stockings she ought to have
darned,
All on the road to Kulu.

Then up and away with their loins girt,
 Away from Amritsar and heat and dirt,
 Pathankote saw them at 1 a.m.

A multitudinous worn-out *them*,
 All on the road to Kulu.

Then away again at six o' the clock,
 Of tongas two, of ekkas a flock,
 The horses jibbed, the horses reared,
 They pranced and galloped as they careered,
 All on the road to Kulu.

At last they reached a sweet, green hill,
 Where air at eve and dawn was chill,
 And they wanted a blanket for warmth at night,
 And heads grew cool, and heels grew light,
 All on the road to Kulu.

Dust and stress were left behind,
 There was ease for body and rest for mind,
 Fir-covered hills were green to the sky,
 And mountain streams went rippling by,
 All on the road to Kulu.

Up in the morning at break of day,
 On to their ponies off and away,
 Was there ever a couple so blithely gay,
 As this man and his wife on a holiday,
 All on the road to Kulu?

Mutton and murghi their only food,
 The little etceteras we don't include,
 The little etceteras in tin and glass,
 They go for nothing so let them pass,
 All on the road to Kulu.

Murghi and mutton, I guess you'd say,
 Are capital food when you've marched all day,

Up hill and down dale and over the stream,
Through a country fair as a beautiful dream,
All on the road to Kulu.

Soup, fish, and joint, an entrée or two !!
Ugh ! they are barbarous ! Give us a stew
Of mutton or murghee, onions, arloo—
Your appetite's good and your luxuries few,
All on the road to Kulu.

Up when the grey dawn is filling the skies,
And the servants and muleteers are rubbing their eyes,
Away ere the sun down the mountains can creep,
While the soft mist still lingers on cedar-clad steep,
All on the road to Kulu.

Reading the story of Time in the rocks,
The water-hewn valleys, the ice-carried blocks,
The gleam of the marble, pure white as the snow,
That tells of some ancient and igneous throe,
All on the road to Kulu.

The sweet rippling sound of the clear mountain
streams,
That brighten our march and accompany our dreams,
The scent of the pine-wood, the sight of the snow—
These are but few of the joys that we know,
All on the road to Kulu.

Here in the hush of the cedar-clad heights,
With their sunshine and shadow and glorious nights,
Here we have found in our sweet, daily life,
That there never were pals like a husband and wife,
All on the road to Kulu !

Manali Nullah,
29, V, 99.

Her Rival.

—*—

HE swore he loved her, swore by all his gods,
 He would forsake all others, cleave to her.
 Yes, swore in the Church—But what's the odds?
 A man can break his promise and the gods concur.

And she gave up the Village she adored,
 The Village that the Thames bears on his breast,
 Gave up the Arts of Peace and chose the Sword,
 Changed all her life and ways at his request,

Tried all her might to please her master's taste,
 Feeling her failure more than her success—
 Finding the studies of her life misplaced,
 Herself a horrid failure—more, or less.

The weeks sped on until they numbered ten,
 For seventy days they had been man and wife.
 And he was true and faithful up to then—
 No rival had sprung up to curse her life.

"Come now, dear wife," he said, one happy day—
 "Come let us take our real honey-moon,
 Half of July, and half of merry May,
 Spend we in Kulu, and the whole of June.

"For when we wed, we had but one short week
 A honey-moon? At best 'twas quarter one,
 But now we'll go the cool, fresh air to seek,
 For health and rest, and I will take my gun."

"And I will take my gun." She heard the words,
 She heard them smiling, answered him with glee—
 A "gun" to her meant killing little birds—
 "Sweetheart," she said, "how happy we shall be!"

And so for two, short, joyous weeks they were,
 Marching through nature's loveliest scene on earth,
 One long enchantment and delight to her,
 And to them both a time of love and mirth.

For hand-in-hand they walked, or arm-in-arm,
 Or through the forests rode they side by side,
 Each day's march had its own especial charm,
 Dearer their comradeship each eventide.

At last there came a day—a fatal day,
 A cloud was drawn across their sun—or moon?
 It was the very latest day of May,
 The eve of the first dawn of "leafy June."

All on a mountain side they were encamped,
 In one small tent—the fit was tight for two—
 Without romance, it *was* a little cramped,
 But still they had a glorious mountain view.

He looked at her. She smiling looked at him,
 Then saw with sudden terror, in his eye
 A something, more than usually grim,
 And in its birth, her smile began to die.

She faltered terrified—"What is it, Vee?"
 And he nonchalant taking up his gun,
 "I'm leaving you a day or two," said he,
 "I'm off to shoot those bears and have some fun."

"Leave me?" she stammered, "leave me all alone
 Upon this steep where bipeds cannot walk?"

Her voice died into one sad, speechless moan.
Said he, "Indeed, 'tis nonsense that you talk."

"'Tis not indeed!" she said, "when you come back,
You'll find me lying murdered in the tent—"
Her prayers were vain, Ah, me! alas! alack!
Gun and shikari off he gaily went.

Then she remembered all those words in church,
Those words that he so solemnly did swear.
Now, lo! not two months wed, left in the lurch!
For whom? for what? Her rival one brown bear!

* * * * *

All through the long, lone day she struggled on,
Her head was aching, and her heart was sad,
For two whole days at least he would be gone.
"I've been deceived!" she said, "'tis cruel, bad!"

She could not eat, and she but swallowed tears,
The sunshine had no gladness in her sight,
And when the noon was passed, she, filled with fears,
Shivered and shuddered at the thought of night.

"Ah! men are not like us!" she sighing said,
"Nothing for him I would not sacrifice,
I've lived too long, 'tis time that I were dead."
Her brow was burning, and her feet were ice.

Hark! what is that? A voice falls on her ear,
She drinks it in, that dear, familiar tone.
"Yes, I've come back, it felt a little queer,
A little odd without my ugly* Joan!"

3, VI, 99.

* Vee says it ought to be "dearest Joan."

Only a Year Ago.

—*—

ONLY a year ago
 (Can it be true ?)
 You and I didn't know
 This I and you.

You and I had not met,
 Fate was unkind,
 But it is in vain regret,
 Looking behind.

Sunrise and dawn have past,
 Noon-tide away,
 But we have met at last,
 Late in the day.

Late, late, so late it seems—
 Time flies apace,
 God grant me in my dreams,
 Glimpse of your face.

Oh ! every hour apart,
 Robs me my due,
 But I'm in thought sweetheart,
 Always with you.

Wixie.



THERE was a small hound, who was young and was frisky,
 A hound? No, a puppy, not yet nine months old,
 Given by Money, was our Mr. Whiskey,
 He could not be purchased for silver or gold.

Of manners and graces he had not a particle,
 Never by morals his soul was perplexed,
 Each tenderly cherished and valuable article,
 Was swiftly by Whiskey purloined and annexed.

Your best pair of gloves with gusto the greatest,
 In a moment he'd tear into neat little threads,
 Your beloved *Pioneer*—and of course it's the latest—
 He'd lay at your feet in a small heap of shreds.

He'd frighten the sheep, and he'd scatter the cattle,
 He'd send the goats hopping and skipping like flies.
 He'd bounce and he'd bark and want to do battle,
 With a dog about three times his own little size.

He'd jump on the table and loot it of mutton,
 He'd sample the butter and cream with his jaws,
 He'd scratch up the seeds you had sent out from Sutton,
 And spoil your best dress with his small, dirty paws.

Sometimes, as a visitor stiff-starched and proper
 Is bidding a stately and formal farewell,
 In bounces Whiskey—the friend goes a cropper,
 And down goes a table and flower-vase as well.

But still you forgive him—he's young, knows no better,
 He'll certainly learn to be wiser in time,
 A casual reminder of cane or of fetter,
 The punishment's always much less than the crime.

But when on a mountain with sides of the steepest,
 Over a valley, where shops are unknown,
 He perpetrates crimes of the blackest and deepest,
 Then one must punish him, cause him to groan.

What shall be done to a dog that in tatters,
 Rends your one sponge that no gold can replace,
 Rends it, and tears it, and merrily scatters,
 The last little remnants all over the place.

"I'll thrash him soundly, don't bother," says Vesey,
 "You shall have a sponge, if I give you my own."
 "To be philosophical, always is easy,
 For other folks troubles," says poor, harried Joan.

"Yes, thrash him, and thrash him the wicked young sinner,
 I'll never forgive him the horrible beast!"
 Laughs Vesey, "I know you will mix up his dinner,
 And call him pet names when you give him the feast."

4, VI, 99.



Stupid.

—*—

STUPID I was when the daylight first saw me,
 But long years of suffering have made me much worse,
 Often I've thought it was time to withdraw me,
 Wondered if life were a blessing or curse.

Hard have I tried to fulfil all my duty,
 Failed oh ! so dismally, ten times in a score,
 But Nature has helped me and Art with her Beauty
 Has given me courage to go on once more.

The stars in the night-time have whispered their story,
 The rocks and the mountains have told me their tale,
 The meek, patient workers, the heroes of glory,
 Have bid me to try again—only to fail.

Yes, I look back, as I'm ending it nearly,
 The way I have trodden with sore, weary feet,
 Has been one long failure, I see it too clearly,
 A horrible failure, solid, complete.

Yet, I began with such hope and confiding,
 Dreamed such glad dreams of the future to come,
 Had such great thoughts in my spirit abiding,
 Thoughts, ah ! yes, thoughts—but my Devil was dumb !

Whom shall I turn to ? Ah ! where in Creation,
 Is there a Power that listens to man ?
 Alone we must stand in our weak isolation,
 Must wait and must struggle and do what we can.

I turn to the past, an answer floats through it,
From one of the greatest of all this great land,
“ We all have our duty, then up, friend, and do it !
Our spirits are finite, we can't understand ! ”

Life, will it pass like a glass that is broken,
Go like a candle that ceases to shine?}
Vainly we seek for a definite token,
Yearn for a future and long for a sign.

Oh ! in my soul is an impotent yearning,
To add but one spark to the glorious ray
Of the lantern the workers and heroes keep burning,
To show the poor pilgrims the easiest way !

5, VI, 99.



In the Camp.

—*—

It's early to bed in the camp,
And it's early to rise,
It's up, and be off on the tramp
Ere the sun's in the skies,

It's never a table we see,
And never a chair,
It's take the things just as they be,
When hunting the bear.

Potatoes and onions are good,
And mutton is prime.
There's nothing to pay for the wood,
And less for the time.

Better the stew these three make,
Than stall-fattened ox,
Your bed as a chair you can take,
For table your box.

Merry the meals we have had,
Though humble our fare,
Eaten, and drunk, and been glad,
Have we, everywhere.

Ah ! better a dinner of two,
With love in their eyes,
Than food bought with wealth of Peru,
Which charity flies.

Dear, when our table is spread,
 Our Yakdahn, I mean—
 And each on our little camp bed,
 The dishes between—

Would I change for a Lord Mayor's feast?
 Or a Dieu-donné spread?
 Ah! no, they don't tempt me the least,
 I choose this instead.

We're waking before it is day,
 When the mountains and snow
 Are standing out solemn and grey,
 And the little stars show.

Then sudden the highest peak glows,
 With the kiss of the sun,
 In glory of gold and of rose,
 The day is begun.

'Tis a life that is free and so sweet,
 Is life in a tent,
 From the dear little flower at your feet,
 That give you their scent.

From the stars that shine out every night,
 Like lamps in the blue,
 (There never were stars half so bright
 As the stars of Kulu!)

From the trees that like aneroid show,
 Your height from the sea,
 You've only to look and you'll know,
 How high you may be.

First, ilex and silvery birch,
Then sycamore, fir.
Ah ! Nature repays our research,
If we listen to her !

But what makes the greatest delight ?
You know it, sweetheart !
Morning, and noontide, and night,
We're never apart !

14, VI, 99.



Koksar Rest House.

—*—

DEAREST, so wrong and strange it seems,
That I sit here alone,
While down the Pass the wild wind screams,
And dies away in moan.

The mountain torrent rages by
With roar that never ends ;
Oh ! weird and lone the shepherd's cry
The midnight silence rends.

Alone ! alone ! oh ! sad and strange
The empty squalid rooms,
And savage, cold the mountain range
That through the darkness looms.

Ah ! sleep, sweet sleep, would'st thou but come
And bridge this cruel night.
And yet, to wake to silence dumb,
My heart is faint with fright.

To stretch my hand, and not to feel,
The tender touch I know.
What horror may the night reveal ?
What depths of dread and woe ?

To watch in pain ?—and yet to sleep
And dream that thou art here,
Only once more to wake and keep
A vigil full of fear.

Downward they go through the wet and loose stones,
Down to the land of Brown, Robinson, Jones,
Repeating the wish in most audible tones,
To "take off their flesh and sit in their bones,"
 Jogging along to Ambala.

Away from the solitude, far from the snow,
Where the fresh mountain wind no longer can blow,
Their tête-à-tête picnics they now must forego,
Must dress in the fashion and dine *comme il faut*,
When once they have reached Ambala.

Unutterable horrors of sweltering nights,
Made frantically hideous by mosquito bites,
That bark them, and mark them, and make of them frights,
These are a few of the many delights,
Of trudging along to Ambala.

Folded the tent, they shall wander no more,
With the blue sky for ceiling, the green turf for floor,
With the scent of the pines, and the mountain stream's roar,
No chitties to answer, no bills to deplore—
But now they go back to Ambala.

But eight happy weeks of sport and of rest,
With scenery the loveliest, air of the best,
With health and good spirits continually blest,
They ought to be thankful, it must be confessed,
For being so long from Ambala.

Still it is certain, wherever they go,
They each carry with them the best of the show,
A friendship that time has but strengthened to grow,
And they'll find when they get to the end down below,
A dear little home at Ambala.

POMES
ON THE MARCH.

*Second Expedition, April 13th to
July 26th, when we heard suddenly that
the Regiment was ordered to China.*

The Tale of a Tub.

—*—

I SING the tale of a Tub,
 A Tub that is made of tin,
 A beautiful Tub, for a daily scrub,
 A Tub you can nicely sit in.

Tin straight from a Cornish mine,
 With a coating of white Japan,
 So cleanly and fresh, it sweetens your flesh
 Be you Woman, or merely Man.

This Tub was a gift of love—
 A gift to the wife of his soul,
 She swore a swear that the Tub should bear
 Her company from Pole to Pole.

Strapped and lidded was it,
 Weighed half of a coolie load,
 She filled it full of linen and wool;
 And off they set on the road.

Its inside lifted right out,
 Of wickerwork strong and neat,
 At the end of the day, it was taken away—
 Behold! your Tub complete!

No more to shudder and shrink,
 From the terrible D. B. Tub,
 From this you may drink, I verily think,
 As safely as have a scrub.

Then up the mountain's side,
 Climbed the Tub on a coolie's spine,
 Made dressing a treat, though the number of feet
 It had climbed was of thousands nine.

Not half of its tale is told,
 Singing its praise as a bath,
 I should make a song too long, too long,
 Telling the uses it hath.

At breakfast and dinner it makes,
 A table of generous size,
 With it for a chair, you enjoy the fresh air,
 And it holds all your household supplies !

So I sing the tale of a Tub,
 May the donor grow more and more fit,
 My bath at day-light, and my banquet at night,
 Would be shorn of all joy, minus It !

Camp above Manali, 9,500 feet.

2, V, oo.



The Heart of the Forest.



In the Heart of the Forest, mid scent of the pine,
 When the sun o'er the mountain's beginning to shine,
 When an improvised table stands close to the tent,
 And with sleeves to the elbow on cooking intent,
 Joan makes the crisp bread and the hot-buttered cakes,
 And gives out the stores and corrects the mistakes.
 And Vee's buried deep—a well-seasoned quhy-ni—
 In advertisement sheets of a four days' old *Pi*.
 Oh! the Forest is sweet in its sylvan repose
 A life of Arcadia all couleur de rose!

In the Heart of the Forest high up on the bill,
 In the heat of the noon-tide all silent and still,
 When birds, bears, and butterflies sink to their rest,
 And shikaris and coolies are snoring their best,
 Then the perfume of coffee floats out on the breeze,
 And breakfast is set in the shade of the trees,
 With murgli of Kulu and tongue of Soho,
 Oh! the Forest is beautiful taking it so!

In the Heart of the Forest all breathlessly dumb,
 He sits and he watches for bears that won't come,
 Till fingers and toes become dreadfully numb
 The Lord of the Show getting glummer than glum,
 Not a shot to be fired, not a bear brown or black,
 He silently, sullenly, wends his way back,
 But the light of the fire greets him glowing and red,
 And the dogs frolic round at the sound of his tread.

His wife runs to meet him with sympathy sure,
 And a cup of good soup is a capital cure
 For the ills that a Sportsman must sometimes endure.
 Then cracking his walnuts and sipping his port,
 "Ah! the Forest," he says, "is the Heaven of Sport."

In the Heart of the Forest, high up on the Hill,
 The cold is tremendous, the night wind is chill,
 'Twere rash at the table to sit after wine,
 In the blankets 'twere wise to serenely recline—
 One glance at the golden stars up in the height,
 One walk round the bonfire still ruddy and bright,
 Then fasten the tent door and lace it up tight.
 And bring out the candles and set them alight,
 And reach down the book we were reading last night.
 Then with interest and laughter we heartily plunge,
 In the wandering life and adventures of Sponge.
 Then soft on the camp falls the darkness and peace,
 The laughter and song of the followers cease.
 In the Heart of the Forest is sweetness and rest,
 If the one you are with is the one you love best.

Moria Dhu,
 II, V, oo



Sleep.

—*—

EYES weary with weeping,
 Brain aching with thought,
 How often your sleeping
 Sweet solace has brought !

Hearts with woe breaking,
 Minds laden with grief,
 'Tis not in your waking
 God sendeth relief.

Souls that were mourning
 Last night in despair,
 Awake at the dawning
 With thanksgiving prayer.

Frames with toil wearing
 Or worn out with pain,
 Rise ready for bearing
 Or toiling again.

Then oh ! for the dreaming
 That buries our care,
 And lights with Hope's beaming
 The eye of despair—

That falls like a shower
 On frenzy and pain,
 To the weary gives power
 For working again.

Thank God, ye distressed !
 Thank God, ye who weep !
 Who in pity hath blessed
 The weary with sleep !

Goose and Gander.

—*—

"I HAVEN'T slept!" said Vesey,

"I haven't slept a wink,

Last night's the most uneasy

I ever passed, I think.

"I turned, and tossed, and twisted,

I wrestled with the clothes,

But the gods themselves resisted,

My efforts for repose.

"I got my pillows levelled

To the regulation height,

No use! I was bedevilled,

For all the hideous night!

"And when, in each gyration

I looked across at you,

I saw to my vexation

That you were waking too!

"Now, why on earth d'ye do it?

You ought to go to sleep!

'A restless fit!' Subdue it!

'Thoughts!' As if they wouldn't keep!

"You've all the day for thinking!

Why lie awake and think?"

She had no art of winking

Or she might have wunk a wink.

Tatti Tatch,

14, V, 00.

Nature.



NATURE is fair on the high mountain crest,
 Yet wanting in somethings is She,
 Two of Her charms that are fairest and best,
 Perched up on this height we can't see.

Hidden from us is the dawn of the day,
 With its delicate flushing of red,
 Lost to our view is the golden array,
 Of the clouds as he sinks to his bed.

Glimpses we have of the valley below,
 As fair as a beautiful dream,
 Mountain peaks covered with untrodden snow,
 On every side tower and gleam.

Cedar and sycamore, ilex and pine,
 Like giants they flourish and grow,
 Nourished by tempest, by shower, or shine,
 The grandest the whole world can show.

Solemn and gloomy their deepest recess,
 When the grey of the evening has come,
 Their awe and their silence the spirit impress,
 And the soul in her yearning is dumb.

We speak not the feelings that rise in our heart,
 When Nature Her power reveals,
 For never can man to his brother impart,
 The highest and deepest he feels.

Oh ! Nature, dear Mother so tranquil and sweet,
 When the wounded heart sighs for a balm,
 Thy breeze on our brow, thy flowers at our feet,
 Thy sunlight, and moonlight, and calm !

Oh ! Nature, great Monarch, majestic and free,
 When true hearts beat bravely and high,
 The strength of the Forest, the sweep of the sea,
 The myriad stars in the sky !

Oh ! Nature, stern Nemesis, ruthless, unkind,
 Relentlessly cruel and strong,
 The crash of the earthquake, the whirl of the wind,
 The vengeance that follows on wrong.

Dumb in Thy Presence unknowing and weak,
 We gaze on thy glorious face,
 Humbly and groping we earnestly seek,
 Some sign of thy pitying grace.

Ah ! Whisper one word, when the bright stars come out
 One word on the quiet night air,
 One word that would banish the Demon of Doubt,
 A Hope that would vanquish Despair.

Seanda,
 19, V, oo.



A Welcome.

—*—

WAKE with a carol fair morning of Spring,
 And over the firmament misty and grey,
 The flush of thy dawning like red roses fling,
 A Baby Boy opens his sweet eyes to-day !

Touch the green Earth with thy life-giving beam,
 Bid primrose and violet lift up their head,
 Daffodils wake from their long winter dream,
 And daisies bloom white for his wee feet to tread !

Blanch the fair orchards with blossoms like snow,
 And flush them and fringe them with delicate pink,
 Put on thy bravest and daintiest show ;
 To welcome the Baby who stands on life's brink !

Sweet little son of a line that is known
 All the world over for beauty and song,
 Happiness take thee and make thee her own,
 Keep thee from suffering and shield thee from wrong.

How, little lad, will they choose thee thy name ?
 What will they call thee in years still to be ?
 Sure they will take from the records of fame,
 The greatest and best to bestow upon thee !

Grand are the deeds that thy Fathers have done,
 Foremost they stand with the sword and the pen,
 A glorious record for ever they've won,
 Gifted by Heaven and honoured of men.

Whatever of fame in the future be thine,
 Or wreath of the Poet, or Warrior's spurs,
 One wish and one prayer for thee, darling, is mine,
 Be fair as thy Mother and loyal as hers !

23, V, oo.

Together.

—*—

LOUD and long the thunder crashes,
 Lightnings flare across the sky ;
 Raindrops fall in heavy splashes,
 On that blessed double fly.
 Everything outside is dreary,
 Wet, and comfortless, and grey,
 But within we're bright and cheery,
 Heaps to read and lots to say,
 Wet, or fine, or stormy weather,
 Little care I which it be,
 Can we only be together—
 Be together—Joan and Vee.

Never stars shown half so brightly,
 Till we watched them side by side,
 Never troubles pressed so lightly,
 Till we two their weight divide.
 Was the world so full of sweetness,
 Ere we wandered arm-in-arm ?
 Or did it lack a full completeness,
 Just to make its perfect charm ?
 Were the forest trees as stately ?
 As deeply blue the summer sky ?
 Or have they grown more lovely lately,
 Since we saw them—Vee and I ?

Sweet the sound of waters rushing,
 From the mountain's snow-clad height,

Fair the dawn through crimson flushing,
Into golden morning light,
Comes the hour of daily starting,
Hour that separates us twain,
Noontide strikes the knell of parting,
Sunset brings him back again,
Happy from the hunt returning,
To the dear, familiar tent,
Where the bonfire's brightly burning,
With its aromatic scent.

So I love the soft, grey, gloaming,
Best of all the hours that be,
When my Dearest from his roaming,
Comes again to home and me.

3, VI, oo.



Lift Thy Blue Eyes.

A Welcome to Little Joycē.

—*—

WEE lassie with the sweet, blue eyes,
That like the cloudless summer skies,
Are clear, and bright, and deep—
So gay and happy when they smile,
So true and loving all the while,
So wistful when they weep.

Oh ! Baby, when those bright tears start,
I cannot tell how aches my heart,
Their secret to disclose ;
And when those dear eyes rest on me
With love, that's half idolatry,
My glad soul overflows.

Oh ! may those sweet eyes ne'er be wet,
With bitter tears of vain regret ;
Nor anguish of despair.
When clouds shall come, as come they must,
Mayest thou discern with hope and trust
The silver lining there.

Dear heart, when first thou drewest breath,
Thou call'st me back to life from death,
Or from the borderland.
Ah ! then a new, bright morning broke,
A holy melody awoke,
Touched by thy Baby hand.

Soft, tiny hand, so small and weak,
 The two can play at hide and seek
 In these two palms of mine.
 And will they take their serious part,
 In household cares? perhaps in art?
 What skill? what gift, be thine?

Wee, tender feet that have not yet,
 The one before the other set,
 That never yet have trod.
 I would that I their path could strew
 With flowers, all the journey through
 That leads them back to God.

How many months must I still wait
 To hear thee, dear, articulate
 The name to me thou'st brought?
 What higher gladness can I seek,
 Than teach thee falteringly to speak,
 The dawning of thy thought?

Lift thy blue eyes again, my sweet,
 That I once more that look may meet,
 Ere thou wast born, I knew!
 For mirrored in thy tiny face,
 Thy Father's very self, I trace—
 In each, I love the two!

Perhaps, sometime—it seems so strange—
 But then the world is full of change,
 And tiny flowers will grow—
 Perhaps, my little one, like me,
 A happy Mother, thou wilt be
 And then my joy thou'lt know.

Our Chronicle.

—*—

SUMMER and Winter, we faced them together,
 Summer and Winter and Autumn and Spring,
 Borne all the burden of dust and hot weather,
 Serpents, mosquitos, and everything.

Winds that would freeze you and stiffen your marrow,
 Tear from your flesh the last vestige of skin ;
 Heat that reduces one's strength to a sparrow, }
 Turns rosy ones pale and the corpulent, thin.

Dust storms and hail storms, rain, lightning, and thunder,
 Drought that has sucked all the life from the trees.
 What sample of weather is left yet, I wonder,
 That is not included in some one of these ?

Since our hands met in that church in Calcutta,
 What have we suffered and where have we been ?
 My pen could not write e'en could my tongue utter
 A tenth we've experienced, a half we have seen.

First, to begin our domestical drama,
 Revolutions, rebellions we've had them galore.
 Mali, and Bearer, Masolchi, Khansamah,
 Long time in sadness and sorrow we bore.

First, came a Mali, two coolies to labour,
 But never a thing for the stew-pot he grew,
 The flowers on our table he took from our neighbour,
 Till at last he went off and we started anew.

The Bearer in years he is youthful and tender,
 In crime he is hardened and venerably old :
 Shirts, socks, and handkerchiefs, toll to him render,
 Nought comes amiss from a jahron to gold.

The Great Mogul loves him, thinks him perfection,
 Turns a deaf ear to his suffering wife,
 She ponders with awe her lord's predilection,
 And sighs when she thinks of this burden for life.

Rupees from Yakdhan and butter from Kilta,
 Vanish before him, like snow in a thaw,
 Slowly, but surely, they gradually filter,
 Into his purse and omnivorous maw.

A Khansamah that hadn't a notion of cooking,
 But understood fleeing in every sense ;
 When, being discovered, he took himself hooking,
 Our chickens and turkeys accompanied him hence.

How the white ants came in swarms to disfigure
 Our beautiful walls with their horror and dirt,
 And how we arose and dispersed them with vigour,
 And ever against them are on the alert.

The serpents that trailed themselves over the gravel,
 And wriggled and squirmed themselves into the hall,
 'Tis perfectly marvellous how the beasts travel,
 Wingless and footless, condemned but to crawl.

The cats that come into the go-down and scattered
 The choicest of dainties in wreck on the floor,
 Glasses and china all ruthlessly shattered,
 Oh ! great was the loss that we had to deplore !

A Khit become fat in the service of others—
That squatted all day like a log in the sun—
But stay!—if I talk of our Aryan brothers,
This story of mine it will never be done.

Ah! well, we've survived them, each great tribulation,
Food for our laughter they often provide—
My fingers I snap at each new botheration,
So long, dearest Hubby, as we're side by side.

Kyelung-Lahoul,
20, VI, 00.



EARLIER POMES.



In the Orchard.

—*—

THE blossoms are sweet on the cherry,
 The apple trees flushing with red,
 I stand and look up through the branches,
 At the blue, blue sky overhead.
 I hear the larks singing above me—
 I hear how the honey bees hum,
 I hear the lambs bleat in the meadow—
 I only, I only, am dumb.
 Yes, dumb with a great expectation,
 Not silent with sorrow or pain ;
 I listen for steps on the footpath,
 I know I shall hear them again.

One sunset like this in the springtime,
 One sunset—I cannot tell when,
 It seems to me only a year since,
 But somebody says it is ten ;—
 One sunset, I stood in the orchard,
 The trees were some rosy, some white,
 The soft air was heavy with perfume,
 Ablaze with the glorious light.
 The bees had gone home with their honey,
 The lark to his rest on the lea,
 The lambs were asleep in the meadows,
 And—someone was whispering to me.

Oh no, I can't tell what he whispered,
 I don't think I ever quite heard ;
 My heart throbbed so loud and so quickly,
 But oh ! I caught one little word.

He bent down his head as he said it,
 The crimson leapt into my cheek,
 He searched in my eyes for his answer—
 He knew I'd no courage to speak.
 Then the sky and the blossoms were hidden,
 The purple-tipped clouds and the light;
 I felt how his true heart was beating
 As he murmured, "My darling, good-night!"

He's coming, I know he is coming—
 "My darling, good night"—not "good bye";
 I'll wait for him here in the orchard,
 Till the stars come out in the sky.
 Perhaps not to-night, nor to-morrow,
 I'm patient, I know how to wait,
 I'll hear him come over the meadow,
 I'll hear him unfasten the gate.
 The last ray of sunshine will linger
 To light up his face with its glow,—
 He will come, he will come in the springtime
 While blossoms are scattered like snow!

They say, I am mad to imagine
 That he should be true to me yet;
 They say that men never remember
 What women can never forget.
 They say he is married and happy,
 That children climb up on his knee,
 Ah! little they know what he whispered
 That night in the orchard to me!
 I know he will come to me sometime,
 I know he is true as the light—
 Oh! heart that must answer to my heart,
 Come back, oh! come back—now—to-night!

Alone.

—*—

I CANNOT read—my books aside I throw.
For the last hour I've sat, and do not know
A word of what my eyes have traced, a score
Of pages have I turned—I'll try no more.

* * * *

Why is it that we cannot always rest
Content to be just what we are? 'Twere best—
Surely it were—to be for ever still
A meek, enduring soul, a conquered will.
These dawning thoughts we cannot put in speech,
This thirst for better things beyond our reach,
The consciousness of individual life,
The certain sense of death, the endless strife
Betwixt the noble and the base. Ah! me!
Were it not better they should never be?

* * * *

Oh! friend of mine, who art so true and wise,
When in my mind perplexities arise,
And doubts come crowding on my weary brain,
I would that thou wert near! The tangled skein
Beneath thy skill would soon resume its form,
And peace and rest would follow after storm,
One glance of thine, one clasp of thy strong hand,
'Twould be like morning breaking o'er the land;
The fogs would vanish, clouds would float away,
And I once more rejoice in sunlit day.

* * * *

And yet not always to my story, friend,
 Dost thou with sympathetic ear attend ;
 I tell my doubts, I pause, but no reply
 Falls from thy lips, and, looking up, thine eye,
 Brimful of merriment, meets mine, where stand
 The unshed tears I hide with hasty hand.
 My very soul to thee I have laid bare,
 Given a shape to thoughts I would not dare
 To utter but to thee. And thou hast smiled
 As though it were the prattle of a child.
 And thou has called me fanciful and weak,
 Until with angry colour in my cheek
 There gushes forth a storm of "eloquence"
 Half passion-born and half in self-defence,
 And then—and then— But need I tell thee, friend,
 Who knowest it so well, how it doth end ?

* * * *

Thou art not here, to rouse with raillery
 Or soothe with deep and kindly sympathy ;
 Thou art not here, and yet, oh ! friend of mine,
 I hear thy voice, I see thy true eyes shine,
 The dancing firelight on thy hair is thrown ;
 Thou art not here ! and yet, am I alone ?



“Rowland, Rowland, Where Art Thou?”

Dr. Rowland Taylor, burnt at Hadleigh in Suffolk,
February 9th, 1505.*

—*—

“SLEEP, sleep, my little one, upon my breast,
My arms shall shield thee from the wind and rain,
Perchance my labouring heart disturbs thy rest,
For every pulse is keener, sharper pain.
See, sister Bessie cried herself to sleep,
Her soft cheek pillowed on the cold, hard stone ;
Rest thou, my baby, rest, and let me keep
My last sad watch for him, alone, alone.

* “His wife, suspecting that her husband should that night be carried away, watched through the darkness in the church porch of St. Botolph's, beside Aldgate. It was two o'clock in the morning, and they were without lights. Now, when the Sheriff and his company came against St. Botolph's Church, Elizabeth cried, saying, 'Oh! my dear father! Mother, mother! here is my father led away!' Then cried his wife, 'Rowland, Rowland, where art thou?' For it was very dark, and the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor said, 'I am here, dear wife,' and stayed. The men would have hurried him on ; but the Sheriff said, 'Stay a little, masters, I pray you, and let him speak to his wife.' Then came she to him, and he took his daughter, Mary, in his arms, and he and his wife and Elizabeth knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer. At which sight the Sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company.”

The cruel wind comes howling up this street,
 And brings the dreary fog from off the sea ;
 Shut those blue eyes at last, and dream, my sweet,
 Oh ! Jesus Christ, what will the waking be ?

“ Oh ! little daughters but for your dear sake,
 And for the perils that before you lie,
 My heaving heart with one wild throb would break,
 I could not live to see your Father die.
 How dark it is ; as though Heaven wished to hide
 The shameful deed that earth shall see to-day,
 Lord ! my strength is ebbing like a tide ;
 I cannot think, I cannot even pray.
 What have I more to ask for, or desire,
 Except that He would stay the driving rain,
 Nor let it cool the leaping, hungry fire,
 So Rowland may be quickly out of pain.

“ ‘ Be quickly out of pain ’—what have I said ?
 Oh ! that my lips should utter such a prayer !
 That I should live to wish my dearest dead !
 Oh, Death, art thou more bitter than Despair ?
 But hark ! there is a movement in the street !
 Wake, little Bessie, wake, and listen child—
 Think you it is the sound of trampling feet ?
 Or is it just my heart that throbs so wild ?
 Thy Father, child,—thy Father, didst thou say ?
 No, no, ’tis still dead night : it is not he—
 His voice—it is his voice ! Oh, were it day !
 Where art thou, Rowland, where ? I cannot see !

I feel thy kisses, husband, on my cheek,
 I feel thy hot tears fall like scorching rain,
 I hear thy voice,—but Oh ! my two eyes seek
 To see thee, Sweetheart, only once again.

Oh ! gentle sirs, be pitiful in this,
Give him one moment, with his own, true Wife !
Not yet—not yet—Oh ! Rowland, one more kiss,
One little word to live on all my life !”

Then they knelt down, those stricken souls, and prayed
“Our Father,” in the dark and dismal street ;
He left her kneeling and went undismayed,
With steadfast heart, a martyr’s death to meet.



Bedtime.

—*—

THERE ! I have finished the chapter,
 The volume is almost done ;
 Time it is that my books were closed—
 It is nearly half-past one.
 Four solid hours I've been reading
 The life of the mighty Pitt ;
 Plenty of battles and intrigues,
 But little of feeling or wit,
 Sea fights and land fights and sieges,
 Treaties, and truces, and laws;
 Births, and deaths, and weddings—heigh ho !
 'Twas time I came to a pause.

Out goes the gas ! now that's pleasant,
 The fire is clear and red,
 I'll kneel on the hearthrug a moment
 And then I'll be off to bed.
 I want to forget old Chatham,
 Or I'll dream of him all night,
 Of Gallant Wolfe, and wretched Byng,
 And wake in a horrid fright.
 Up, come the bonny blue blazes,
 And flicker now here, now there,
 I wonder who first made a fire ?
 And I wonder, how ? when ? where ?

I like that myth of Prometheus,
 That story of Grecian land :
 The daring deed, the long, long pain,
 Ah ! those old Greek tales are grand :

To dare the anger of Heaven,
 To bear it without a groan,
 To suffer ages and ages,
 And then to be turned to stone ;
 To win for his toiling brethren
 The fire with its peaceful glow,
 Then to lie out on the mountains
 In the piercing wind and snow.

Out in the terrible tempest
 Fast bound with a cruel chain,
 Torn by a loathsome, hideous bird,
 Frenzied with speechless pain.
 Nothing to hope for—no nothing !
 Rest here, nor reward elsewhere,
 No ray to lighten the darkness
 Of pitiless black despair.
 Not one out of thousands he dowered
 Shed a compassionate tear,
 Never the voice of a faithful friend,
 Fell on his agonised ear.

Oh ! to me in the brave old story,
 There's something that seems divine,
 A glimpse of the noble life of one
 Long after in Palestine.
 Oh, life ! is it worthy the braving ?
 No ! never in selfish ease !
 We must dare, we must toil, we must suffer,
 For the common good—like these.
 Work's a wonderful cure for sorrow—
 But hark ! it is striking two !
 And I'm bound to be up at seven,
 Little fire, good night to you !

A Picture in the Fire.

—*—

By the fireside I am sitting,
 Painting pictures in its glow,
 Thoughts across my mind are flitting
 As the shadows come and go.

In my ears there is the ringing
 Of a little baby's joy,
 And its mother softly singing,
 Singing to her blue-eyed boy.

I can hear their merry chatter,
 Through the open nursery door ;
 I can hear their footsteps patter
 As they run across the floor.

Dreamily I hear its crowing,
 Dreamily I hear their play ;
 I see a picture in the glowing,
 And my thoughts are far away.

I can see a field of battle,
 And the cannon's lurid glare,
 And the pretty nursery prattle
 Changes to a martial air.

Where the war is waged most loudly,
 In the fiercest of the din,
 I can see a figure proudly
 Leading others on to win.

Foremost in the rank he's dashing ;
 With clarion voice I hear him speak,
 With his blue eyes brightly flashing,
 With a red flush on his cheek.

"For the sake of England's glory,
 For the sake of England's Queen,
 On! my men and charge before ye!
 Hearts be brave! and swords be keen!"

Where the fiercest fight is faring
 Hand-to-hand he meets his foe ;
 With a lion's strength and daring
 Through the smoke I watch him go.

From the strife at length he's turning,
 Pale, with many a crimson stain,
 The proud light in his blue eye burning,
 Still unquenched by bitter pain.

* * * * *

And the distant roar of battle
 Changes to a sound more sweet—
 Changes to an infant's prattle
 And the tread of little feet.



Parted.

—*—

WHEN we parted, mother, mother—
 Ah ! how many years ago !
 When you kissed me, kissed me weeping,
 In an autumn sunset's glow,

I was just a big-eyed baby,
 Years I numbered only three,
 You in womanhood's full glory,
 Took your last long look at me.

Dimpled were the little fingers
 Softly stroking back your hair ;
 And my heart was pure and sinless,
 Ignorant of pain and care.

Oh ! the years, the long years, mother,
 Since that still September night ;
 Pain, and wrong, and endless labour,
 And the struggle to do right.

When we meet, oh ! mother, mother,
 When we meet—if that should be—
 Will you know me? Will you love me
 As you did when I was three?

For the baby voice is lowered
 To a minor key in tone ;
 And the happy childish laughter
 For long years has been unknown.

And the little dimpled fingers
 Now are worn and thin and white;
 And the big eyes look out sadly
 As on one perpetual night.

And the cheeks you warmed with kisses
 Till they glowed and kindled red,
 Long ago grew pale and hollow—
 Scarcely paler were they dead.

And the hair you loved to fondle,
 Which was sunny like your own,
 Streaks of grey are mingling with it,
 Streaks that yours had never known.

Burning wrong and bitter suffering
 Are familiar now to me;
 Sorrows that you never dreamt of
 Learnt that child you left at three.

Never till that last, long parting
 Was there seen in your true eyes
 Any look but love or laughter,
 Tender pity, or surprise.

Can such eyes read half the story
 That such eyes as mine can tell?
 Grief has thrust us far asunder,
 Far as that last sad "Farewell."

Happy daughter, happy mother,
 Happier still as faithful wife,
 Only cares like summer cloudlets
 Cast a shadow on your life.

If we meet, and you all radiant,
 Stretch to me an eager hand,
 And we see each other's faces,
 Mother—will you understand ?

Will you know what I have suffered ?
 Will your heart with pity melt ?
 Will you comprehend the struggles
 Which your spirit never felt ?

No ! that dream, like all the others,
 Fades as years go hurrying by ;
 Spirit cannot answer spirit—
 No, not even she and I.

Your sweet eyes, disturbed, bewildered,
 Into my two eyes will look,
 But their tale be hidden from you,
 Hidden like a sealed book.

Oh ! that cruel autumn evening
 For the little one of three !
 We may meet—but child and mother
 Never, never more can be !



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